DAVID SPARENBERG

# Troubadour and the Earth on fire

*An Eclectic Selection in Poetry & Prose of Heart, Soul & Imagination*

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# David Sparenberg

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## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My father was a womanizing, hard drinking, bar room joker, an irresponsible, sentimental but likeable fool. He had a natural, undisciplined and never cultivated knack for music. Rather than play an instrument he chose to have another pint, then another, and to play around.

In the beginning, my mother was young and beautiful, a country girl with a secret (and at last fatal) obsession... Three years in and mom took herself and three kids—my two younger sisters and me—and left her first man. The girls were farmed out to her mother and aunt. I was kept.

When I was four years old, my mother remarried. Her second husband (the stepfather) was a large, obscene and cruel, petty criminal, with a sadistic bad temper. He beat my mother in front of me and turned

my childhood into a nightmare hell of physical and emotional abuse and constant fear. I have nothing favorable to say of this man. Like others of his type, he exercised power through intimidation and arbitrary punishment.

All tyrants are players in history. There are vastly more of them than of saviors and saints. Not all tyrants are public figures. The domestic majority afflict the future without being called out, renounced, or brought to justice.

A democracy, worthy of the name, must be diligently watchful against becoming a mobocracy, the core of the mob made up of hate mongering, wife beating and child abusing little gangsters. And a democracy must equally be defended against the self-serving elite who denounce empathy and use chaos, public silence and moral collapse to cover up their lies, their grandiose greed, and political crimes.

Early on I discovered isolation and how turning away from suffering and neglect was the unspoken ethos of American society. Outliers are not only made but are targeted and institutionally earmarked. People ignored the fragile, melancholy child who, waiflike and skeletal, subsisted nervously before them. The wounded adolescent was scrutinized with suspicion,

pressing the wound of violated trust deeper into a prematurely buried soul. I adapted and became a rebel with a cause—alertness vs. stolidity, sensitivity defying numbness—a boy against the world.

A nation devoid of moral conscience, an instinct woven integrally into the fabric of social values, comes abruptly to the collapse of public platforms for moral discourse. Dialogue is a process of address and response. The intention and content of response defines the possibilities for change.

Only books were loyal. Books saved me. Without a home to belong to, books offered shelter. They pointed out the realities of untouchable dreams and highlighted routes to longed for havens. Books spoke of alternative possibilities. Narrated parameters for being human and pointed out paths excluded from everyday limitations. The price of the exclusive friendship of books, however, reinforced isolation.

Loneliness clings and becomes a difficult habit to overcome. Like a winter that never ends, or like napalm that sticks to human skin and burns a permanent scar into memory. Rarely, and only with relentless determination and courage, is loneliness reformed (transformed) into creative solitude.

Even today, so long removed from causative experience, I may often fluctuate between the loneliness of dissociative self-alienation and the profound solitude of creative connections.

I grew up taught to be incompetent, incapable of accomplishing anything of value, unworthy of acceptance, feed on suffering and humiliation, wretched, unwelcomed, and undeserving of love.

Yet having innate capacity and intelligence to discern and disentangle the circumstantial and accidental from authentic identity, the signature of my adulthood has been vision-quest. Therein I have uncovered and recovered the deep-human of qualitative relatedness to otherness in the openness before Being, and out species profound need for experiences of ecstasy.

Through decades now, in twilights and in darkness, fair weather or tragic storm, I have sat in a trinity of dialogue with truth pledged Gautama and that pacifist revolutionary Che from Galilee. Together we collect tears of the world's neglect and sew patchwork garments out of starlight and laughter to clothe the nakedness of those who are marginalized or cast out, cold and often desperate in neglect.

Together we co-write chapters of lost years from the lives of Quasimodo. Trying to assure that nobody is utterly forgotten. Left outcast, without a garden to seed and grow. Impoverished, without a tree of life. Frightened by a shadow, shivering, never daring to share the inalienable warmth and unique beauty hidden inside the chitin of torment.

Nurtured resentment is among the worst personal and collective deformities resulting from nihilism. Bitterness corrupts, decays, putrefies life. I have met these human demons on the battlefields of Yes and No, falling and rising between good and evil. I have stood face to face and looked into their diseased, malicious, and most normally banal eyes. Resentment and bitterness have staked no claim inside and hold no power over me. My heart is a Sentinel of Joy. My soul is a Keeper of Freedom. Out of suffering, a one-time victim becomes a full-time person. A person arrives at the threshold of liberation.

*"To dream the impossible dream, To fight the unbeatable foe, To bear with unbearable sorrow, To run where the brave dare not go, To right the unrig table wrong, To be better far than you are'**–the sweet knight errant madness of Quixote! This is human life at its most vulnerable. This is experience as reachable as yet possible toward

fulfilling a human evolutionary purpose. It is contrary to the dry husk of the sleepwalking dead. Contrary to the cruelty of obsessive violence. A viable counter to the abusive misuse of power and the malignant possessiveness of indolent cruelty and extravagant greed.

******Opening lyrics from the song The Impossible Dream (The Quest) by Mitch Leigh & Joe Darion.*

## SUNRISE RAGA

*Is it beyond thee to be glad with the gladness of this rhythm; to be tossed and lost and broken in the whirl of this fearful joy?*
*-Rabindranath Tagore*

When sun rises
Sap rises
In climbing trees
Mist
On running mountains
Rise
On grass
From the churning seas
Through flowered fields
Through meadows
Pulsing feet
The dancers
Festive dressed
With eyes like ornaments
Arise

When sun rises
Longing then
In women
In men
And single-ones
And holy pairs
Where hunger
Strikes and drives
As smoke
As twisting columns
On the air
Coupling there
Arise

When Earth bathes
And blossom beckons
With her delicate perfume
With her odors
Where henna cries
As a bird
Cries, cries and cries
When Earth rises
To sun's rise
Through windward winding
Through the lordly way
Through houses
Of morning
Into openness
Of sky
The openness
Of sky's new day

When Earth
Bathes and blossom beckons
Pulsing feet
The dancers
One with fire
Their eyes
With laughing stars
Net
In the wave
Of sun's first rays
Arise

Musicians then
The muses' men
Stirred from the restive
Halls of night
Longing
For first light
Arise…
Arise and play

## TWILIGHTS

The world is heavy
Heavy
Like a desert sunset
At the end
Of a blistering day

When the sun
Has fallen on the earth
With shameless lust
And heat
Feasts on the flesh
Of all living.

The world is light
Light
Like a jungle sunrise:
Countless, awakening vapors
Setting free
Tropical birds, fragile
Lotus perfume –

The delicate, delectable kisses
Of lotus blossoms.
I am
As the world is:
Two yet one.
When my dark
Face turns away
From my light
Face
When my light
Face
Turns away
From my dark
I am dangerous
Death's companion.

When my two
Faces interface
The higher self
And lower self
Meet, nakedly, fearlessly, and embrace
I am harmony.
I am peace.

Like two
Reciprocal bowls
Catching and pouring reality:
Beginning…endlessly.
But where
In motion and vast illusion
Is truth?  Wait!
I will tell you.

Between this
And that
Is all I am.
I am like the world.

We are tattooed
With one another's
Twilights.

# COSMOGRAPHER

When Anna was seven
she drew a picture in chalk.
She explained it like this.
The stars sweat.
And the sweat drips down
and touches the earth.
The drops change
into frogs and flowers.
The flowers are soft
and colorful.
And they smell like the sky.
The frogs
are little and green.
And the songs that they sing
are star songs.

In the chalk
could be seen
-stars
raindrops
flowers
frogs-
all falling
praying
blessing the Earth.

# EARTH FOLK

What if we
Are lives like shadows
What if our emotions are thin reflections
And behind our
Pretentious humanity
The elemental spirits live

Passionate
Stronger, uncannily
More resolute
A primal honesty
At work in their
Numinous intercourse

And they are bells
And we are ringing
Moving on
More distant hills
Forgetting
Songs that their lips keep pliant

What if we are but
Pale before their brighter
Faces
And lacking in love
Before the way they kiss
Everything
And embrace all changes

Passionate
Sensitive, so
Beautiful

And they are
Immortal watchers
Watching us
And we, the homo sapiens
Are breaking
We are lonely

## RED HAWK SONG

I admit that I love you.
My heart sings strongly
through the fire of my body.
The sun and moon
are prisoners of my love-war:
I offer you the robes
of the splendid Earth.
All of the simple things
I wish to give you:
wood for the fireplace,
the colors of meadows,
sensations of morning.

I have spoken your name
to the four rising winds,
the blood of my hunger
cries from within me:
I cannot continue
this night of withholding.

Hidden in seasons,
resplendent with war paint,
the earth-dream conspires
with this wound in my body:
I can but surrender
to love's terrible beauty.

Now is not morning,
now is not evening,
the hour of meeting
when creation attends
to a man with a woman.

I am giving your name
to the sacred four corners,
chanting your name
to clouds far below me.
My heart-blood is singing
through wings of my body.
Through the fire of my body

I confess that I love you.

## KALYPSO

Her eyes tell of a faraway reality
and her look brings that reality near.
Her hair is as if thousands of candle wicks,
with each wick lighted by a flame of the sun.
She dreams of dancing with the wild god of ecstasy.
When her body moves, Earth is tickled
into heat. Then winds roll
and billow with resounding laughter.

A green cat emerges from the aura
of a garden's stems and floral leaves.
Slowly poised, with sleek composure,
cat softly dances on the air. There
feline and feminine are magically one!

In late afternoon, mistress of the island
will take tea on the veranda.
And the image of nudity will
make even stones she passes over
smile with the silent rapture of longing.

Into the night, when tide is up,
curling and uncurling in
endless murmuring tongues, she will swim naked:
breasts on the crests of caressing waves her
hair a loom for seafoam and beading moonlight.

The sea-folk will gather then,
calling her by her name. And she
will swim to them through the liquid-fire
of the wild god of ecstasy.

## IN the AFTERGLOW

we fell upward
and landed on our heads
amid perfumed pillows
in the soft, rain scented bed of clouds

our toes curled around
the roots of oaks
we drank dark water
the taste of death

death was sublime
but cast us out
our flesh fallen sparrows
the dewdrops of breath

death was sublime
death cast us out

we fell upward
and landed on our heads
amid perfumed pillows
in the soft, rain scented bed of clouds

## The FERTILITY RITUAL of HUMAN RENEWAL

*inspired by an anonymous, vintage photograph*

A group of women come together.
All of the women are pregnant:
some at 3 months
some at 5 months
some at 7.
The women remove
all of their clothes. Together
they enter a May meadow.
The women turn eastward toward
the rising sun. Morning sunlight
sweetens the women's washed and
smiling faces. Morning sunlight
warms the women's naked
swollen bodies. The pregnant
women reach out their arms. In
unison the women pray.
They pray to love.
They pray to life. To life!

An herb-collecting apothecary
in a nearby wood
stops his gathering. *The Plant*
*Healer* beholds the naked
pregnant women praying. Rapt in wonder
this woodland collector
looks on the primal scene – looks on the ritual
of human renewal.

A group of women come together.
All of the women are
pregnant: some at 4 months
some at 6 months
some at 8.
The women remove
all of their clothes. Together
they stand on a shore
of the breathing sea.
The women face westward

toward the setting sun. Sun-
light gilds waves of the ocean.
Sunlight paints gold
on the women's smiling faces. On the
women's naked and swollen bellies.
They reach out their arms.
In unison the pregnant
women pray. They pray to love.
To the cycle of light.
They pray to life. To life!

A Troubadour in a small
wooden boat, fishing in
the deep waters of
hearts and dreams, stops
in mid-poem. He
beholds the naked, pregnant women
praying on the shore. Rapt
in wonder, *this lyric-sailor* looks
on the primal scene – looks
on the ritual of human renewal.

## SIGNAL FIRE

*for Joan Sparenberg in loving memory*

I have come forth
to set my heart
on the ground
and to make a small
signal fire,
mixing smoke
with dust and clouds.

The blue-white
flame, with the orange
aura, bright
as the blood oranges
of the south,
this
will be the burning
of my soul.

How long

does a soul endure
in a dying place?

Pilgrim,
drop some alms
of your holy journey
into this bowl
of wavering embers.

Behold,
the frailty
of the human body!

The sun-
drenched silhouette,

perfumed
by the summer earth.

## BLACK PROW SHIP

In the morning,
A blue-scale dragon
Drinks milk
From a golden bowl.

At midnight,
An iridescent, green dragon
Drinks wine

From a silver chalice.

Come midday,
The lake is as calm
As glass.

A black ship,
With dragon prow
And helmsman clad
In black armor,
Glides across
The spellbound water.

The ship's sail
Is a white accent:
White mask
Above the mirror
Of its dark progress.

On the shore,
A red rose drops tears
On the winter grass.

The seasons
Come and go,
In the bittersweet, erotic play
Of dragons.

Age bent sages,
With iron lanterns,
Travel
Through the changing clouds.

## ORACLE

The bird
Is a circle.
It wants to fly.
It flies through the sky.

The bird
Is a sky.
It flies
Through itself.

It is a
Storm bird.
It resurrects
The dead.

The bird
Offers itself
To the volcano
Of the sun.

The mothering
Wind strokes
Wingspan
And tail feathers.
The circle
Crossing the horizon

It is a bird.

## HEALING NEEDS

I think all I really need
Is a field
To go walking through the field
In the Spring.

I think all I really need
Is a hill
To go up the hill and down the hill
In Autumn.

I think all I really need
Is a road
To wander where it takes me
In the Summer:
To know its every stretch and turn

I think all I really need
Is the shore
To stand in the fog of Winter
With wind beating on my face
And listen to the ocean breathing
With cold and restless passion.

I think all I really need
Is to quietly sleep.
And in my sleep
To dream of flowers
And from my flowers
To dream of stars.

And to let go
Of something that hurts me.
And to be at peace
With letting go.

## ARBORETUM in AUTUMN

Earth is an orange
with a crimson aura;
Sun a green melon
with aura of gold.
Sky, deep blue,
shades through lavender
into purple-puce.

Underneath
an oriental maple,
with leaves turned scarlet,
a gypsy plays
a hand carved flute.
If there is a pond,
it is green with reflection:
the bubble-dreams
of Taoist frogs.

From a stone beneath
a bridge of oak,
an angel departs.
Or a dove flies up
and kisses heaven.

In the softness
of a moment,
the heart finds solace.

## SACRED PSYCHOLOGY

Anger is a mood,
an emotion.
Experience it and let it go.
Like a wave of the ocean,
it moves over the surface, breaks
and dissolves against the shore.
The ocean does not say,
"I am a wave."
The way of the ocean is expansive plenum
and not reduction. The ocean knows
that every ripple is in transition.

Love is a condition.
Love and the ocean are one.
Only a fool
tries to hold back a wave,
identifies with ripples,
ignores the stillness
behind ephemeral motion.
The fool does not know
the nature of nature
or the core of creation.

The one who says,
"I am anger," rather than saying,
"Anger passes through me,"
knows only the surface,
is propelled by illusions.

Such a person
is pushed and driven
by the waves of emotions,
but ignores the profundity
of the constant sea.

Love is a condition and is eternal.
It accepts all things in transition,
yet contains the depth
transcending reason.
Love and depth are one;
God and ocean coequal.
Two choices
lead to joy and inner peace:
The first is letting go,
the second is abiding.

Abide in love.
Then all things
of Heaven and Earth
pass through you
in their quest for blessing.
This is the power
behind myriad forces.
This the reality
beyond the rippling
play of illusion.

The ocean dissolves
the ego of the shipwrecked
and the "I" of the drowning.
Among the merfolk,
there is no distinction
between themselves
and the kingdom of love.

## A LITTLE PIECE of a BIGGER PUZZLE

My eldest son, a man who is yet learning the lessons of humility, said to me, "The world needs more midwifes, not prophets." Being favorable toward midwifes, in the heat of the moment, I could not but agree.

Afterward, sitting alone in thought, I questioned myself: What is the difference between a midwife and a prophet? Both attend to the task of labor. Both are intensely engaged in bringing life into the light of experience.

Both midwifery and prophecy contain a promise. The dual promise is an affirmation of the miracle of life.

## DEATH WISH

*Sometimes the frustration is so intense,*
*I find myself at a loss for pleading words.*
*My status as a beggar*
*and the Earth on fire…*

They remove their blindfolds
and march in mobs blindly
to the edge of time's abyss.

They leap in droves shrieking
into the flames of volcanic love.
The Earth forsakes stability.

Before their bodies crackle into
cinders of compliant nothingness
their disempowered souls depart.

Some but scarce a few recycle
onto the elemental wheel of
the great mandala: round
and round the maelstrom of the multiverse.

The majority get blown as chaff by
the wind-breath of regret into
an infinite forgottenness of oblivion.

Dry wave upon dry wave: black
rain tsunami: Earth in flames. Husks
without harvest.

*Everyone chooses every day, consciously*
*or habitually between*
*resistance and compliance, death-wish*
*and the charisma of life: between*
*parasite and person…*

*Somedays of late or months unending*
*I no longer know how*
*to translate the terrible cry of dying wilderness*
*into the vulnerable language of human prayer.*

## NIGHT is OBSIDIAN

To whom shall I call out When pain remains unbearable When suffering transcends light And you who are beside me in the darkness are silent

To whom shall I call out When the monument of the city is broken and scattered When the only sounds are flies and ashes

To whom shall I call out When stars abandon the sky Night is obsidian And the moon has drowned in a lake of black oil And you who are beside me in the darkness are silent?

# VOICE

what
do you cry out already
when what can you
a single creature suffer
when I
who am Creator of Creation
am afflicted
by miseries of the world

stand up
ingather strength
and put into your mouth
words
that will illuminate
breathe fire
upon the dying souls
and lifeless mercies
of my humanity

for I would walk about
and look
and see
candle flickers
and the love lamps skipping
in the thick of night
and dancing
on the kiss of morning

hold up your fingers, creature
who made you
life up your eyes
that I may pour the oil
of my anointment over
and strike with my tongue
the match of amazement
and take you up
and set you out
as a warning beacon
and as a signal fire
along the roadways
and at the crossings
of my suffering world

## MINDFUL on HIROSHIMA MEMORIAL DAY, August 6th (annually)

***"Now I am become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds,"*** *attributed to India's classic Bhagavad Gita, these are the words spoken by American nuclear scientist Joel Oppenheimer upon witnessing the destructive magnitude of the atomic bomb he was instrumental in creating.*

Throughout the overall biomass of the Earth, there is a constant dynamic of asymmetrical balance in favor of life. Predators and parasites are kept in check. Unable to attain immortality, we are the sole species to make killing fields, no man's lands, dead zones, to build concentration camps, manufacture weapons of mass destruction, politically and ideologically pursue genocide, ecocide, and the civilizational; obsessive and oppressive preparations for omnicide, out of our conditional intolerance of conscious mortality. This is what I call the Death-Wish of Humanity. It is highly contagious, proliferates within the nihilism of thingness, deconstructs, reverses or negates transcendent values, and is our most dangerous human pathology.

Eco-pioneer Thomas Berry, challenged us to *"reinvent the human on the species level."* At the canker-root of addressing this challenge for radical transformation is the Death-Wish and the proclivity of rage for waging war. Buddha answered the question of suffering by detachment, by letting go of that which cannot be held. Jesus responded with a message of love. But the generosity of the message has not overcome the clutching powers of fear and hatred. Where do we begin? And to begin now, so late, is to recognize that time is a wall casting a dense shadow over our efforts.

In a lecture titled **In the Time of Murderers**, delivered in several South American countries in 1949, Albert Camus told his audiences, *"Most simply, it requires one to love life more than any idea…(to) replace efficiency by values of example."* But that was 1949, ancient history in the culture of forgetfulness. In the 76 years since Camus' modest address, the cult of the walking dead, matrix technology, and the idolatry of the human death-wish, nurtured by boredom, bombarded relentlessly with junktification and so-called alternative facts, is exponentially more efficient. Then again, how, and where (and when) do we begin to counter bad thinking with good action?

Once more Camus: *"the time has come to bring the forces of dialogue together against the ideologies of power."*

## NEVER AGAIN…And GAZA

Those innocent shot in the backs of their heads execution style. Those innocent shoveled into the flames of crematorium. Now they are renamed and unnumbered, gathered among the hosts of heaven. Now they are there among the spirit herds of buffalo. Out in the judgment clouds, riding the stampedes of tempest horses.

There is no triumph in the loneliness of God. When justice becomes vengeance, there are only the bloodstains of suffering, the absence of conscience, the unforgiven keening of survivor sorrow.

Do not ask where God is. Ask instead why wrongs done continues to happen.

Never again is not a defense when genocide becomes a policy of race and power. History is not made by free people. History becomes our cataclysm and death overwhelms us.

Do not ask: where is the mercy of God in the massacre of children? Ask where we are. In what density of shadow is empathy imprisoned? On the spike of what injustice is faith impaled?

Beauty is replaced by terror. Life is compelled to yield to the politics of mass murder Here is Earth. Death overthrows life. Here is Earth. Joy is crushed by crime. Do not pray for God's intervention. Silence has answered apathy and the failure of courage.

Never again means (as well) not committing atrocities today against others, as the inhuman was committed yesterday against you. We are conditionally shared.

Stop withholding food from the starving. No people live without a land to live in.

## ROSE COLORED MIST

There comes a time, a point refined,
a time and place in the twisted
course of life
when we need the whirlwind to stop,
all of the paper of the age of
information to stop, all of the words
thrown irreverently over our paths,
all of the sciences, the popular deceits,
the commercialism, the wars
When we wish everything could go
into a soft, slow motion, spiritual blur
and we could step out of our clothes and into
the rose-colored mist of an April morning
Or out of our many false faces into
the jewel-like dew of a sweet

Spring dawn
To discover whether love like a candle
is still burning,
whether life has purpose, who you are,
or if I,
on my two feet, with my two hands,
my head, my heart, my sex,
am worthy of reality.
I do not want to be a pariah, a lie
But to say only, when I point
in my direction, "man"
and when I reach toward you, "woman".

God of all ages, of eternity, God!
hear this naked, hungering prayer:

Return us to stark simplicity,
to pointing in sudden wonder, to stuttering,
to needing to touch and be touched,
ignorantly, but with innocent, incendiary passion.
Thus let me be removed from all emotions
that are not matches.

Set me on a hill.
Let the wind of living catch
my delicate silence and blow me,
billow me, into a bonfire of truth.
When I turn toward you,
let me see an answer
and when we move, we dance together,
let all questions, all howling voices,
the dissemblance and distractions,
the fevers and fanaticisms,
fall into their nothingness, fall
far away from gentle us and sleep
in the ruins of forgetfulness.

There comes a time, a point,
a time and place where necessity and grace
interpenetrate and we must be free
to know the simplest, purest knowing:
Where is love? And when does love save us
from our violence?

# CHILDREN

I love to hear the voices of children
the sweet, melodious voices of children.
I love their faces.
beautiful faces.- happy faces.
And spontaneous bodies:
bodies of curiosity
bodies of light and life.
How easy to love!
How easy to suffer!
And how spontaneously to share the
well-waters of emotions:
to laugh - to cry.
Theirs is the health and purity
of truth, untouched, innocent
before the learned disorders
of adult confusion – adult corruption
I love to be in the presence of children.
I love them.
But how do children grow
up to become citizens of a world of
cruelty and want, violence and oppression?
A world perpetually at war against
nature. A world at war against children.

## EATING of the GODS and the DEMOCRATIZATION of DELIVERANCE

You cannot be all things
You cannot have all things
You cannot say everything righteous or beautiful
or even everything that needs to be said

You cannot be the world governing order
You cannot be the prince of peace in glory
and the founding father of trust, truth and
community
You cannot be synagogue and mosque
and catholic church

You cannot be the bank of ambition
or the pulse of aspiration, inspiration
or the pillar undergirding the mishaps of the poor
You cannot be the estuary of ubiquitous pain
or the pit of vicarious agony
or the midmost point in the zenith
of meditative light

You cannot love all loveliness
or possess all sensations
or parent all children
who grow and need feeding, anymore
than be a brother to every man
who prays for a friend
or all friends in prayer for their brothers

You will not, no, you certainly, certainly will not
end all wars
correct injustices, end intolerance
or give the healing medicine to each and every
thought askew or soul tormented or twisted limb
Or reach deed, deep within and mend
the sources of malice, malediction and festering
atrocities
—abrupt violence or the violence premeditative
and executed by design

You cannot be the psalmist David
with his God-touched, angel's tongue
or the sagacious Solomon, with his dialectical-intuitive mind
or the fire empowered Elijah
on a chariot of wings on the wind
of eternity-piercing time
nor even become any of the wide world's billions of other
forms and faces of frightened, absurd, honest
and death-defying human beings

You can only be you (small before Being)
say what you say (rich when only stammering)
You can love whom you choose (with paradox torn and committed passion)
You can do what you do
(in the full composition of act and intention)
in the shadow and the substance of each sacramental, twofold, implicational act

And in so doing
and in so saying
and in so loving
—-especially in the loving
with its pearl-like mystery
with its transformational chemistry
and with its spectrum of free floating, face painting colors
by being
only who you are and what you are
when you are and where you are
you share a little (but oh! so importantly)
in the gold pot of creation's bounty and carry
the passionate cross in your limited, penny-poor, pivotal
portion, miraculously bite and
kiss the full, red, honey-dipped and wine sopped lips
of poison, dismemberment… and salvation.
.

# ZIMZUM*

Before time and anything knowable, when God (Sentient Source of Creative Cosmic Energy) was all and all was but the Infinite, the Unity of God, the intention toward the Magic Mirror of Otherness arose (differentiated, as it were) deep in the ineffable godhead and **God withdrew into God** (the act of *zimzum*), opening a circle, a womb-space in the midst thereof.

Into this expansive opening, which was, as it were, both a wound of displacement and an orifice of display, God for that purpose emanated a generative flow of ten rivers of divine lights of diverse qualities, into a waterfall of evolutionary life.

This was the beginning of the multiverse, and this, theearth-world-sphere of habitation was within. Of which it is written that God found the post-withdrawal and work done to be good, notwithstanding the flaw, the breaking of the vessels of receptive structures resulting from the intensity of divine enthusiasm and superflux of potency beyond imagination.

Of this it is written in the Book of Psalms *"The Earth is the Lords and all that it holds."*

How large in this declaration of sacred ownership is the word **All!** And if there
is even a smattering of truth in the belief, sometimes held by some people, that
God, the Master of Long-Suffering Restraint, withdrew from Self into more
constellated Self, from Depth into profounder Depth, for sake of the Opening
of Being and to create the Mirror of Otherness to oversee the processes and
experiments of biotic evolution, then to participate in **ecocide** is to commit a
crime of cosmic consequence. Nothing is forgotten and not all atrocities can be forgiven. Ecocide is the shadow of bitterness – nihilism the shadow of resentment. In the shadows of ecocide-humanicide is the ultimate shadow, the darkness of total eclipse. This is called Omnicide. It cannot be forgiven. Omnicide removes the possibilities of address and response.

******A word from the Kabbalah of Issac Lauria, mystic of Safed, meaning withdrawal or contraction, implying restraint, or even self-effacement.*

## GREEN RAIN

My soul is green rain
in a dry, gray land
in a season of drought and fire
at a time of lamentation
in the place of forced extinction.

My voice is a lover's voice
breaking over heartache
longing to whisper truthfully
to the souls of lost lovers.

My soul is green rain
at a time of lamentation
in the place of forced extinction
in a season of fire and drought.

## SITTING BULL (Cry of the Earth)

Two Hawks sat up abruptly in the dark of his tipi. His eyes were wide with fear and sorrow. "Did you not hear it?" he said to the woman beside him. Sleepily, she nodded and answered, "There was a sound. What was it?"

Two Hawks replied, "It was the cry of the Earth, sounding in the voice of Sitting Bull. The old chief is dead, murdered by soldiers of the strangers.

"The time of wild horses, the time of buffalo, the time of tribes of the prairie is gone. The time of freedom is over. From this night on, through many moons and seasons, Earth will grieve. Earth will grow lonely.

"No more will the face of wisdom be seen by the rising sun. No more will the wind listen to noble speech and respond. From this night on the Earth is weeping and will continue to weep until there are no more tears. Until the land is dry with dust of the strangers. Until the rains of the Great Return. Until atonement, this night of loneliness will not end."

## The AMERICAN DREAM

*Chant Over Turtle Island*

Song
for the Paths of Freedom.
Song
for the Keepers of Earth.

Song
of the orca is rising..
Leap
of the salmon returns.
Song
of the orca is rising.
Leap
of the salmon returns.
On the land
big patterns of thunder:
ten million
buffalo herd.
On the land
big patterns of thunder:
ten million
buffalo herd.

Drums
of our hearts go flying.
In the south
the dance of blue corn.

Drums
of our hearts go flying.
In the south
the dance of blue corn.

Song
for the Paths of Freedom.
Song
for the Keepers of Earth

## HOOP DANCER

I am of the Earth:

My footsteps are dance steps
My blood
Is the flow-course of my life
I belong to the tribe
Of the Belonging
I dance down
Against the firm-soft body
Of Mother Earth

My prayers
Are light rings of smoke
My prayers curl skyward
On clouds of sage
The sacredness of life
Begins with the rhythm of breathing
My heart is beating! My heartbeat
Is my drum of life

The hoop where I dance
Is sacred ground
The sacred hoop
Is my circle of vision:

I am of the Earth.

## TROUBADOUR *

Every time we reenter a place
Every time we rename a name
Every time we reenact
An event of sacred history
Resurrect
The beauty of a face
You
Life's children at the crossing place
Pilgrims
Of pellucid plain
Live once more
In our intensity.

Bright sun energy
Covering the Living Earth
Languages
Of mystery clouds!
I call to you
The Ancient Ones.

To all who lived
With life's true face
To all who loved
In life's embrace
To all who live
In love and faith
I call to you.

**Most likely, the troubadour in this poem is also a shaman. The ancestors, the Ancient Ones, the great souls, who were passionate lovers of life, discoverers and recovery pioneers and pathfinders, point the way from quests past toward the dawn horizon of evolutionary liberation. To live "In love and faith" is living in the miracle of love and trusting the beautiful, perpetually dynamic truths of creation.*

# MEDICINE DREAM

I have a dream:

at the center of the dream
is circling ocean
in the center of the ocean
is turtle island
at the center of the island
is vision mountain
in the center of the mountain
is healing crystal
at the center of the crystal
is sacred light
in the center of the light
i sit dreaming

I have a dream:

i dream i am a tree
my roots spread out
beside a place of water
in sunlight
my branches turn to fire
my leaves are prayers of smoke

my heart beats like a drum
inside a stone of power

I have a dream:

my dream is at the center
of great silence
here at the center
i sit dreaming

## THUNDER HEART

Work to be one
with words of the winds.
Rise up
into the shapes of
sunlight and water.
Into of the colors of leaves, foliage
and the fragrance of orchards.

The way we now live
is worthless lies.
The Mother is not only
Beauty – Earth is for justice.
Wait a moment,
don't grow impatient!

Is your name now Satan
when it could become Eden?
Do you live in man's death-wish
who could dwell in Earth's dream?

Give yourself freedom
to walk and breathe deeply.
Feel how it feels to belong
In the Circle of Life.

Wherever you go
add strength to the Great
Mandala - the Wheel of Creative Motion.
Sow seeds in all seasons.
Speak your heart
with the power of thunder.

# CHILD OF DARFUR*

*a Protest Monologue*

***Darfur, South Sudan, 29 October 2025:****Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the World Health Organization (WHO), said that more than 460 people were killed at the Saudi* ***Maternity*** *Hospital—mothers, infants, visiting families, including siblings, and medical staff..*

You explain it in the eyes of a child, how children are born into this slaughterhouse world and here is hunger and war; here is neglect and pain, thirst and famine, hatred, crime and abandonment. But

a child is just a child, a miracle happening in a season of play. But pain is bigger than children. Fear is bigger. Wounds in the heart where blood paints heart shapes. The mind blown skulls. Death.

You explain that if a child can understand the inhuman, then I can understand how madness is a mother of children who breastfeeds nations and murder, murder is a father's breath, casting shadows of phantoms—being men in armed uniforms—onto the hiding places, the secret treasuries, the dream incubations, of God:

Child Faces.

But if a child can explain your, our, the adult explanation back to me, to us and still be a child, in the trance-dance of innocence, and look back at life with children's eyes, wide with wonder; images of a dove taking flight out of a palmed clod of clay or angel walking dream waters, being a fisher of salvation for drowning souls—for heavy malice is corruption, dry, the husk, the waste, the crown of thorns stabbing the heart and war, the fires of hell; then I too will feel no pain, no pain or shame, outrage or despair, no, no, no, no agony or down in my bowels where conscience shudders gut wrenching convulsions of anguish and disgust (rebellion is the first human, is body first, responsive flesh)… But I will conform too, compliantly shut up, be withered as well, normal and withdraw into desiccation.

As silent as stone when storms break over this Earth of homelessness. Rags of living refuse; refuge. Refugees. Victims. O loaves! O fishes! How vast the multitudes in the lands of possession where demons, devils, shape-shift into us! How overwhelming, brethren! Sisters!

People, there is terror. There is terror and terrorism. There are armies; there are terrorists: legions, armies of terrorists. There is horror. There are vampires, zombies. There are monsters, psychotics, psychopaths, pedophiles politicians, sadists, executioners. War!

And there is Death. Death unbound. DEATH in caps. Death and children. Death as direction, death at horizons. But a child, a child would slip away, would sail off to find the Spirit House of God, where loved ones lay dreaming, where love is collectively safe. O Gautama! O Lord Jesus! New baby Moses in a basket of trust on this plagued Nile of tears and trouble. Sorrows, brethren, sorrows! Woe! Now who's gonna save us? Who's gonna save us now, we who slay the flesh of tomorrow? Blood. Ashes. Drought. Famine. Howling—Dust.

Darkness, brethren. Witness, sisters. Portents: Dark descending. Dread of dark. Savage sun erupting, furious, over all the earth at one and the same hour. One and the same… Imagine!

Come near. Prophesy. Explain infanticide, explain state sponsored crime. Marauding, wild dogs of Golgotha, the dog-men who chew bones of life, sacredness gone mad, and the venomous swarm of our insects of war. But you, you and I verify soullessness. Explain dare, tell it, clarify. Turn genocide into a shape that will not haunt for generations. What can, what does, it mean to say, as we stand apart, like statues of narcissism in death's garden of guilt, mute and surrounded by networks of mass graves? To say Mass. To mouth words. Liturgy: Child. Elliot's Hollow Men. Nietzsche's Last Man.

Go! Tell the betrayed of Africa: "The hyenas are praying. The scavengers of slaughter are the gods of money, mayhem and war." Shout it out:

**Child of Darfur!**

*****_A horrific genocidal war took place in Darfur in 2003-2005. War reignited in 2024 and continues through 2025. Along with the countless atrocities of intended genocide, there is a campaign to use rape as a weapon of war against women and girls in the region. Not much of the world is paying attention, which is all too common when it comes to wars in Africa. In the epoch of nation-states, geography is political. Politics, in particular when Aryan (ethnic cleansing) and imperialist, tends to be racial. This applies to the politics of war as well as the politics of poverty._

## STILL LIFE of HUMAN MADNESS:
*a History of Trauma in Three Movements*

Beneath the Labyrinth of Civilization
are the catacombs of silence
in the catacombs of silence
are the haunts of shadows
in the war-rooms of shadows
are the ghosts of memories
with the ghosts of memories
are the histories of the forgotten
with the ghosts of the forgotten
are the ashes of our names.

We Have Lost Our Eyes:
and with our eyes we have lost our ears
with our ears we have lost our tongues
without our voices we have lost our minds
without our minds we have lost our spines
without spines we have lost our hearts
with our hearts cold we have lost our souls
without souls… without souls… without *our* souls
what fate awaits us?

The Gardens
of Civilization are the ruins of graveyards
in the graveyards are stockpiles of gravestones
beneath the stones, the broken tablets
are the bodies of our children.

# The LAST PUBLIC PLATFORM for MORAL DISCOURSE

Emerging
From the Orphic cosmic egg
Submerging
Into the pool of night
A sentient being
Dreams
Of broken eggshells
Immersive, bewildered
A sentient being
Tumbles in the salted, murky swirl
And surge of time

A sentient being
Merely creature
Is both good and evil.

Who cast no shadow
The prophet spoke
Enters the guiltless
Encounter with God.
A stain of bloodshed
Remains indelible

The Enlightened teacher
Taught
Who, without attachment
Reconciles the
Forces of incessant opposites
Sits Zazen
Before the open gate of
Nirvana.

The creature designed
To make choices does
Not always make the
Best choices. There
Is the flaw in perfection.
A sentient being (the unfinished human experiment)
Is both good and evil.

Life
Is maintained on Earth
Through an asymmetric dynamic
In favor of life. The Absolute Death-Wish
Civilization of Abstractions drives
Toward negating life's dynamic. The
Absolute of negation is nihilism. The

Absolute of politics is totalitarian. The
Absolute crime is mass murder.
An absolute hatred of otherness
Is denatured ecocide. Absolute
Dishonesty is betrayal of trust.. And the
Absolute of self-loathing, of homicide
Is the insanity of omnicide.
Omnicide: total extermination.

A sentient being
Mere creature denied
Evolutionary aspirations (denied
Integral experiences and access
To imagination)
Is both good and evil. Is history:
The playbook of human all too human.*
The absolute of history?
Ask Hegel. *No!*

*Stop!* Stop thinking
As you've been taught.
Stop making nonsense.
Feel what can be felt
In the moment. If you cannot
Love me, at least hold me close.

The minimum of civility
Is hospitality. The minimum
Of caring is sheltering warmth.
Treat me as a sibling
Or at least as a friend.

******What is this, "human all too human" in Nietzsche's sense of the phrase? It is yet to be human but conditionally to exist, in mere existence, without the soul-deep aspiration and inspiration to seek out and experience the dialogic encounter between an awakened, questing soul and the addressing presence of Personated Spirit.*

## STREET PRAYER

Blessed are you thirst
that teaches me the piety of water.
Blessed are you hunger
that teaches me the generosity of bread.

Blessed are you prejudice
that leads me in mindfulness
to embracing strangers.
Blessed are you despair
that creates me again
through strength of prayer.

Blessed are you hatred
that opens my wounds
to the healing of peace.
Blessed are you, my ordeals of hardship
shivering of cold
the grieving of loneliness
indifference of neglect.
You teach me through suffering
the skills of survival.

Blessed are you dreadful darkness
that murmurs to my midnight heart
the promise of returning light.
Blessed are you terror of death
that binds my soul
to the passion of life.

Blessed are you who are numb
who do not see or hear me.
Through you have I learned
to lift my voice in protest.
And to practice the mercy of God.

## The FLEET of SMALL SHIPS

The lands were on fire
Flaming terrains of human torches.
Even the flocking carrion crows
Would not descend the smoking clouds
To feed on this charring mass of murder.

But the gentle of heart who
Had no part in wars and lies
Traveled together to the meager shore
To embark on the fleet of small ships.
To cross over the ocean of corpses.

Ah! even a frenzy of sharks would not feed
On this bloody mess of mass murder!

But the gentle of heart
Who had no part in wars and lies
Boarded their self-guided ships
To sail to their island destination.
With soul-friends aboard
And a cargo of seeds, with

Families of loved ones together. With
Clans, with goats, with milk cows, with clover
feeding flocks of sheep, and hounds. And their books
To renew the spiraling
Wheel of life – to redream the dream of creation

Arks and ark makers voyaging
To the dove of peaceful waters.

The gentle of resilient heart
With another holy part to play, all
Bright with hope and shedding
Pearls of survivor's tears, spontaneous
In prayers of courage and humility, embarked
Sailed out toward the horizon
Of the sea. Survivors enroute
Grateful for the navigating dawn, safe
And beautifully resourceful
Upon the fleet of small ships.

Arks and ark makers voyaging
To the dove of peaceful waters…

## A FLORAL MYTH

Flowers came upon the Earth
And they were beautiful.
And a new sweetness
Was introduced into creation.

After flowers covered the lands
Women came upon the Earth
And they were beautiful.

The women were inspired by flowers
And the flowers taught them.
Like elder sister instructing younger:
The flowers revealed
The potions of fragrance
The magic of colors
The secrets of softness.
And music and dance
And the flames of candles
Were introduced into creation.

Men were entranced.
Men stopped being grubby brutes.
Men because knights
Riding fine white horses.

Men became troubadours
Inventing beautiful words
To compose songs of romance.
And men became heroic fools
Wandering in forests
Crossing wild seas - endlessly
In search of beautiful women.

And the sweetness of love
Was introduced into creation. Although

Men were fools
Before there were flowers.
And men were fools long
Long before there were beautiful women.
And too many men remain
Fools to this very day. Running
In rings, like lathering dogs
Chasing their tails
Trampling down flowers.

## SHIVA

will you
wont you
will you
wont you
wont you
join the dance

one foot
in the waves of time
one foot
in the ocean of eternity

spinning worlds come
spinning worlds go

tear-flame
of a million suns
laughter
of scattered stars Will You

wont you
will you
wont you
wont you
join the dance

## GAUTAMA

The world kept rushing by.
And with it anger. Finally
he freed his emotions from the tangled world.

From a palace window he could see
the shore of an ancient sea.
In his heart was a timeless melody.

In circling winds echoed
secrets of forgotten languages.
Somewhere out beyond
unfolded the lotus of compassion.

In the lotus life was beautiful.

Hearts and eyes see
all that is given to living senses.
Soul unburies intimations of the unknown.

Out there a reach beyond
the touch of hands
life retains eternal sweetness.

And life beyond suffering is beautiful.

Like the scent of
burning sweet sage
poems curl and swirl upward
in the incense of prayer.
In prayers of fragrant smoke.

From a palace window he could see
a mountain raised by the power of dreaming.
From the vision of his dreams
he could see the way back home.

In the lotus of cosmic tranquility

the peace of Gautama is beautiful.

## MIGRANTS

Every crime committed
Against a person
Because of the color
Of a person's skin
Is a thorn in the Crown
Of the Cosmic Christ.

Every act of violent bloodshed
Comingles the blood of victims
With blood of The Innocent.

Outgrow the will to power
Get over fear, give up cruelty
Let go of hatred, resentment and rage.

We are not here to cast stones.
We are here to plant flowers
In communal gardens. Not to wage war.
We are love's migrants
In the Garden of Souls

## The HUMAN ONE

Buddha comes down
After being a prince
Living among the elite
In wealth and luxury.
He enters the world
To renounce privilege
To dethrone arrogance and ignorance.

Jesus rises up
(even beyond the empire of death)
After living among
The wretched of the earth.
He enters the world
To end oppression, tyranny
And to empower love.

The Human One
(the choosing thereby chosen)
Stands on the ground of meeting.
The heartbeat wings, the
Soul, a flower in bloom, opens.
Choices are made to decide
The future of Earth and Humanity.

# HIDDEN TREASURE *

I've come to plant some seeds
I've come to plant a tree
I come with a treasure
Buried
Deep
In the depths of me.

I come like land to land
I've come like sea to sea
Truths of the Earth
And the secrets of dreams
Deep
In the depths of me.

Who will walk among flowers
Harvest fruit
From the life-giving tree
And who will be crowned
With the ring of light
Found
Deep
In the depths of me?

**Soul, as hidden treasure (the personal mirror of God), is a cherished concept among Sufi Orders. The awakened, perceptive soul, connected in reciprocity to the natural realities of cosmic creation provides the foundation for evolutionary liberation. The seeds to be planted are the seeds of mindful behavior and relationships. The tree is the individuated vision of the Tree of Life. Flowers are the "lilies of the field". The harvest is the community of the faithful (gardeners and fieldworkers who harmonize Heaven and Earth as a social contract) The crowning ring of light, a halo symbol, is what Abraham Lincoln called "the better angels of our nature."*

## WHAT the SUFI SAID

In your heart of hearts, a heart-shaped mirror. Mirror of peace between wings of fire.

In that living crucible—a gleam of blue light. Light is your soul: Angel of Life.

Soul is as hard to follow as footsteps of God. Soul is as easy to affirm as trust.

Soul is felt. She is shared. The same as when lovers share love. The way every one of us desires freedom.

In the paradise of mystics, the archetype Rumi is naked. But knows nothing of it!

At dawn, at midnight, Adam is born as image and likeness of the Tree of Life. Creation breathes rainbows when the One breathes through us. Eve is giving birth—Mother Havah—to a Garden of Eden.

Welcome, Wayfarer, to the public house of Planet Earth. This cup made of water holds the wine of laughter. Enter when you are confused and thirsty: drink!

## MY FRIEND My Friend

Generation after generation, Earth's miracles are betrayed. The ordinary undone and people, salt of the Earth let us say, are sacrificed to the schemes of crooked hoarders and the wealthy few.

But listen. Stop!

If you want to know what to believe in, go talk with birds, like those who sat on the arms and shoulders of Saint Francis. Ask the deer of trust, descended from those who fed without fear from Francisco's wounded hands.

If you want to know how to live—how to face east in the semblance of woman and face west in the semblance of man—go down to the pub of mystic drunkards. Those who dream and who cast spells over time. Say to the merry musicians there, "Which of you now is Rumi?"

But wait! Stop! You already recognize the poet among poets. A kaleidoscope in the spectrum of love.

Rumi is the Sufi whose breath is filling space with flowers of oxygen. Whose face, singular like you, is beautiful with light.

# WALKING BACK ZARATHUSTRA

*When Zarathustra was thirty years old he left his home and the lake of his home and went into the mountains. Here he enjoyed his spirit and his solitude, and for ten years did not tire of it. But at last a change came over his heart… --Nietzsche*

When Zarathustra came down from the mountains, he met the people living below and spoke with them. The prophet said, "From a single spark the world becomes conflagration.

The people who heard were shocked by the pronouncement of this peculiar stranger. Some among them replied, "Is the world to become dust and ashes? Who are you?" questioned others. "Would you walk among us and bring destruction? What is this terrible spark you dare speak to us of?" The prophet observed the terror on the faces of the people and laughed. "What a waste and pity," he told himself, "so accustomed are they to being downcast and living in fear."

Zarathustra looked around, for a crowd was now gathered, and he spoke boldly. He said, "What is already dust and ashes will fulfill itself with or without miracle. While those who are seeds will blossom as mercy into colorful perfumes. Those who are trees will bear fruit. Flowers will inspire hearts; fruit will nourish souls."

Most standing before the prophet were puzzled and speechless. But one spoke up, beyond confusion, tauntingly saying, "All of this from a single spark! What then is this spark that can turn the world of combating light and shadow into fire?"

"Friend," the prophet answered, "I recognize your courage. Then let me tell you. In the beginning when Creator Goddess-God set the incandescence of being in motion, unleashing power out of withdrawal, from the inscrutable depths of the mystery of androgynous nothingness, this spark that I have foretold is the same as the spark that moved all that ever was, or is, and will ever be."

Most now struggled with this riddle, hunched, or shrugged and turned away. Some were convinced the prophet was mad; delusional from having lived too long in solitude among the mountains. They wondered smugly: Has Zarathustra not heard that God is dead? Or that we mortals have replaced the Ancient of Days with the Will to Power? We have submitted to hording

and ignorance, are without compass, dimensionless, yet we are content. We will not question. We seek no communal fire to set our comfort and convenience ablaze."

A few remained awestruck, however, touched by some reality deeper than isolation, convention, forgetfulness. These latter were those who sensed the presence of lost language in the prophet's words. They were to become Zarathustra's companions, as the spark foretold was re-birthing in the fertile depths of their souls.

Some of the companions believed the spark was love and the prophet had come down to the people to return the world to love. For the world, they knew, was already far gone into hardness and hatred and into violence. Steadily, under the cult and culture of desolation, the rootless world was reduced to wasteland.

Others of the companions believed the spark was freedom and the prophet had come down to the people to set the world free from fear and darkness, and from the abyss of history, the past, and the fatality of human self-reference. These knew that only the greatest desire; the fire that leaps into belly and head from the furnace of the Creator; could reverse the world's enslavement to affliction and conflict; to surrendering to the degrees of death, and to the dictates of death,

devoid of beatitudes: existence without reverence, resistance, without rebellion and hallowing.

But which group is right here: those who stolidly turned away? Those whose faces fell as they showed the prophet their backs? Or which of the two camps of companions, and what common ground would unite them? Is love the key to liberation, or liberation the striving way, the rite of passage, to set love free?

## A WILD GOD

God turned my way. God spoke before me. God said: "I am tired of these houses of worship, the walled buildings of men. They are beautiful. Some are exquisite, some even sublime. And they have served a purpose.

"But I who am beyond walls am weary of these dividing walls. What is a mind set against itself? Or what a mouth devouring the limbs of its body?

"I long to be out in the wind. And I am the wind.

"I long to be under stars and the deep space cradling stars. And I am stars, the cradle, the cradling, and the dark mystery of surrounding and gestating space and time.

"I long to be in sunlight and moon-glow. And I am the light and the glow—the radiant.

"I long to be out in rain. I who send rain and am falling rain and the weeping of angels.

"I long to be in snow. And I am the scripture of snow and the calligraphy both of frost and water. Seasons of holding and the seasons of letting go.

"I long to journey freely in warmth, wafting over many lands. And I am the fire and the breath moving the myriads of creation. The elements and the many walks."

I heard these words. I felt them as feeling words: the words of a wild God with Goddess form. Longing for a change in relationships.

## AUTUMN MUSE

My guardian visitor visited me

to give me the gift of inspiration.

She spread her wings of desire. She sailed skyward. She put her signature and one of the names of a god of light on the mist of passing clouds.

My guardian visitor visited me

to give me the gift of memory.

She fanned out her merrow* tail and splashed in ebbing waves. She put her signature and one of the names of a god of changes on the sands of a tide-washed shore.

My visitor rested her golden head on the pillow beside me. She breathed into my ear. She whispered secret words of eloquence and beauty and named the name of a mask of one of the gods of love. Her eyelashes colored my cheeks. Her lips were like moist candles. Her kisses watered the roots of the tree of my soul.

I awoke out of dreaming, my senses enlivened by the power of music. Over the hills chimed the bells of freedom.

My visitor vowed never to leave me.

At times irascible, she keeps her promise. In the morning, we wander together like sun and shadow clasped in harmony among autumn leaves.

**Merrow: Irish language term for mermaid.*

# DESIRE

I am a fish
Asleep in a tree.
The moon is blushing
The sun is in love.

I am a lion swimming
With whales in the deep
Of the deep blue sea.

The moon is blushing
Sun is in love. Tide is up!

I am a sea turtle riding
The curve of a rainbow.
My shell is etched
With spiraling stars.

I am a dreamer
Of infinite changes.
I am the dream of
The Earth who dreams me.

Because of this felt-sense
I know that I am.
The moon, she is blushing
The sun is in love.

## GOETHE SONG #1

Who will sweep ashes
from the sky?
"Not I,"
says the fallen butterfly.

Who will stop fire
from consuming the tree?
"Not me,"
replies the homeless bee.

Who will quell the tempest
of the rising sea?
"Don't look my way.
Don't trouble me. I do not care."

There is twilight
at the convex of morning.
The rose of light.

There is twilight
before the concave of night.
Night's saraband of stars.

Those who belong here, on Earth
walk the Earth
in acts of beauty. Live
life as prayer. A covenant for peace.
Some, suffering like a knot
in the tongue of language
might call those blessings "Woke."
I will but call these beautiful.
Truth is beautiful. Goethe wrote
*When the moment is fair!*
*Linger there.*

# LOTUS

Why the moth
and butterfly
why the flame
and why the eye

why the lotus
and heart with wings
why the night of spiraling stars
and why the spirals of our dreams

Why a seed
why drops of dew
tell me why am I
say to me honestly
why are you

Why the mountain
why a tree
why the moods of wind
why the dances of the mantic sea

why the moth
and butterfly
why the lotus
why the human eye

## GOETHE SONG # 2: Let Us Go

Between great mountain peaks
a radiant beacon resembling
an eye-filled sentient orb,
the guardian angel stands
watching over the deep green
and sacred valley floor.

Here the seeds of peace grow
in natural harmony.
The primordial friendship between
Spirit and humanity
revives and evolves. Cleansing…
Resonate. And healing the Earth.

No towering, fierce seraph with
a blazing blade of lightning-fire
bars the arboreal entrance way.
This is a place of Mother Nesting, long
after she has wept her eyes out
along the thorny travail and
suffering odyssey
of her scattered children.
Who dares prevail?

A traveler impassions tenderly
to a kindred soul, “In haste
my love, let us go.”

Between great mountain peaks
light shaped into an angel form
stands watching.
Here the tattered tree of life will grow.
The primordial friendship between
Spirit and humanity will return. Healing
of the afflicted Earth. “In haste, my love, let us go.”

## FISHERMEN'S CHANTEY

Fishermen of the sky
We sought the flying fish of God.

Fishermen of sea
We sought the mermaid's kiss
To bestow on drowning men, their lips
The wish for immortality.

A mollusk has a mollusk temperament
Exhales a mollusk's breath. And every
Mollusk is an ocean's tear. The world
Is made like this.

Fishermen of dust and sand
We sought to make a mirror, to catch
The light of cosmic stars: the multiverse
Of dreams.

Fishermen at the graves of time
We sought to haul in
Bygone love. And bring the homeless
Home again. The human heart
Is made like this.

## CELTIC SONG

Once we ran in grass
Our hearts were on fire like the sun
Once we ran in sand
Our breath was in love with the wind
Once we walked on waves When the moon was full
We swam with merrows* in the wild northern sea

Once we were free
And wanted no more from life
Than the passion to live it
And we ask no more from freedom
Than to be free

**Merrows is the old Irish plural for mermaids, mermen, and the people of the waves generally.*

## REUNION

Go to the roadside and wait.
I will join you soon.
And we will walk on together.

The horizon is always before us:
the dawn of a new day
night of the moon
our love and the stars.

Bring the two apples
of gold and of silver.
I'll bring the song of freedom.
The song the muses taught us
when we were barely children.

## ORPHIC VOICE

Somebody sang a song.  Song
moved on air
across land, across water.
It was heard far away.

The song sounded
in ears of another.
It brought a voice as
sweet as wild honey
and saying something.

That song
made a stranger's eyes widen.
That song
entered the heart of a lover.

A
scribe
in the House of Memory
dipping one finger
into a rainbow
into a puddle of gold
remembered the song.

This is how I began
at dawn of day
at the origin of time.
An unknown singer
an Orphic voice
singing to life spontaneously.

Song on the wind!

That is how I will end:
a well in a circle
reflecting a rainbow.

## STELLAR JAY

Early morning—my neighbor and I are talking, watering our joint gardens of sunflowers and thriving tomatoes. Suddenly elated, she says, "Look at that beautiful bird!" I turn to look and reply, "That is a Steller Jay. It is unusual to see one here in the city. They prefer cleaner air, higher terrain and minimal human encounters. We can find them up on Mount Rainier, but even there a sighting is rare."

The garden plants are dripping wet and my neighbor comments, "Maybe she needed a drink." To which I respond, "Perhaps. But it is a long way to fly for a sip of water." The property and symbolism of water.

Reflectively in the twilight of evening, I am meditating on the auspicious visitation of the Steller Jay from the morning hour. The Mountain Spirit had sent a messenger to the Valley Spirit to communicate that within this region of contrasts and discourse there is a precious harmony.

Harmony is not a static condition. (Neither in a specific bioregion nor in the common perception, or misperception of Heaven and its dubious promise of eternal vacuity and afterlife boredom!) Harmony is a dynamic process, a robust yet delicate interplay, interweaving, of energized forces. Alan Watts defined harmony as contained conflicts. An excellent definition and also true, and the early Greek philosopher Heraclitus would likely have agreed.

Harmony implies reciprocity and a constant flow in balance. Balance in all workings of nature and in human conduct seeks acknowledgement. And balance must be protected. For our sentient species, dialogue is a way of sanity for embracing diversity and maintaining the contained conflicts of harmony.

Spiritual Ecology understands this even if the application is as rare for most of us inhabiting an urban matrix as is the visitation of a Steller Jay.

# DRAGONS

The Red Dragon of Discord
The Green Dragon of Peace
The Gray Dragon of Twilight
The Orange Dragon of Dawn

The Blue Dragon
blue-white, blue-violet, blue-black
eyes blossoming blazing gold
is a Spirit Messenger

Dragons
together in a circle turning
in a spiral of Cosmic Dance.

# ZEN MEDITATION

She stands at a point of darkness. Disciplined with precision. The point is the dark of darkness. The point is the edge of light without light. In the night sky no moon is visible.

Her feet rest side by side. Her head is extended forward. Her face is turned outward. She is mindful. The hem of her dress flutters gently from respiration without cause and effect.

Before her is a wall of fire. The wall is a dilemma. She must solve the problem. She must move without moving. She must go from equipoise without departing. She must step out of who she is without abandoning the self of who she is

On one side a roaring wind with the breath of a predatory beast prowls and is waiting. On the opposite side is a desert of ice. No paths are located. No keys can be found. In the prison of ice, the cycles of trees and the keepers of time are frozen

.

The fires of hell are renunciation. The light of enlightenment is letting go.

If she reaches out to touch the wall of fire with the tips of her fingers, her nose, her toes, her tongue or her eyelashes, she will burst into flame. Her memories too will burn to ashes.

She concentrates energy. She balances on one foot. She poses in the form of a crane. The crane is a nanosecond before flight.

The crane transforms into a winged dragon. Dragon enters the wall of fire. Dragon passes through. There is no wall. There is no fire. Without a moon to sail on, the night is a web of wings

When smoke drifts off, there is a waterfall. The water whispers with the suspiration of mist. When the mist lifts, there is a blanket of shadow. In the shadow contours are silhouettes of the spires of Nirvana.

The blanket of shadow folds into itself. The meditator stands in balance. Tranquility resumes. She looks out at the night sky. Her eyes are filled with lotus spirals of **zazen*** stars.

***A key in Zen practice, Zazen is to sit in lotus position and meditate.***

# ZAZEN

I see myself in the mirror
Of my mindful meditation
I clap my hands
And I laugh
I am here
Alive on the Earth
In the gestalt of the living
I am real
And the miracle of life is beautiful

Life is transient
And death is one of life's transitions
Death the Threshold
An infinity of fluttering colorful
Veils From life to life, veil to veil
From world to world

Keep your imagination supple
Through the changes of days and cycles.
There is a politic in vogue
To silence every voice of dissent
A campaign of authoritarian tyranny
To further fear, chaos and isolation

I turn my face in your direction
There you are zazen
In the mirror of your mindful meditation
We see each other openly
If we dare to if we care
We can reach out and even touch
We can even
Speak each other's names

I view your nearer
Than social thought presumed
We are related, a relationship
Genetically conjoined
I clap my hands and I laugh
You are real, alive
In the gestalt of the Living Earth
A miracle in the sphere
And the miracle of life is beautiful

## UNION: the Harmony of Contained Conflicts*

On that very day, a most auspicious day, as rosy fingers of the dawn began to caress the curvaceous contours of rolling hills, and the golden smile of sunlight renewed its occupation of the sky, the angels of heaven assembled in choirs and sang angelic songs. Little birds left their treetop nests and flew into the clouds singing their sweet morning songs, conjoining with the melodies of angels celebrating the reawakening of light and life.

Each of the four great winds placed two fingers to their lips signaling silence. Calm spread over the land and all of creation moved sublimely with a slow and pleasant rhythm. Animals of forest, field and of the air gathered in a ring, defining the ecology of sacred space. The white deer with wide branching antlers, the knightly unicorn and golden crane were present in that circle of luminous diversity.

Sun and moon shared equal portions of the morning sky. And the primordial pair, having walked the walk of sentience beneath the rainbow and traveled the serpent road of time, appeared, awakened and wiser after reincarnations of strenuous exile. Here they were hand fasted and gradually the couple merged back into one body, ecstatically spherical, joyously buoyant, emotionally fulfilled.

This was the origin of the myth of androgyne transmitted orally by philosophers and the elixir source of soulmate quests whispered together by lovers throughout sojourning generations..

Blessed is that land which enshrines and celebrates the auspicious event. Blessed are the people who commit the event to the tradition of memory and who recall it. Blessed are they who tell the story. Blessed are those who listen.

That which is above mirrors that which is below. What is below sets in motion what is above. That which is below mirrors that which is above. One mirror is visionary glass. One mirror is obsidian.

When there is peace, there is peace. Nature is the harmony of contained conflicts. When there is war, then there is war. Justice is the seal of harmony. Chaos befalls civilizations when the seals of reality are broken.**

******A phrase taken up from Alan Watts., from The Book Against Knowing Who You Are.*

*******Breaking of the seals of creation, patterns, is a major, recurrent motif in The Book of Revelation. In his essay Apocalypse, DH Lawrence reflects on the Revelation of John as the most frequently read text in the New Testament Cannon and an apocalyptic template in the belief system and directional motivation of Western Civilization.*

## WE ALL NEED the SAME, Not Color and Everybody Hurts

There is no need
for fear
no need and no room
for hatred
in the heart of trust.
And language of the heart
is beautiful.

There is no need
to deny
to obstruct, obscure
to destroy
to pile up walls
to idolize an idea/ideology
and denigrate life
the power (the elan vital) of life
if - if the mind is clear
when mind is calm and
generous. When
honesty is wed to courage
and courage is in love
with honor, is
in love with humility.

There is no need
for greed, for insatiable consumption
for aggression, for
violence - owning a gun, for
targeting somebody, pulling
the trigger, no need
for committing a crime of murder.
No need, no evil urge
when the soul is
awake - the "woke" soul
of mutuality, empathy, maturity.

Experience is freedom
a democracy of freedom
founded
on accessibility of experience.
The expression of freedom is
social, cultural, radically human.
And beautiful.

*Earth provides us common ground:*
*soil*
*rain*
*the winds, waters. Space to live in.*

And there are only
two rules for walking upright
in life; for becoming a prayer.
And the language of life too
honest articulation is beautiful..

One—let go
of everything you thought
to dominate, to break
into pieces, to
dissect, to reflect your ego
to distress and control. Get
over the habits of cruelty
over demanding privilege from
forced injustice. The elitism
of injustice.

*Look at the elegance*
*of a flower, any flower*
*the piety of a tree*
*seeds of plants, light*
*emitting miraculously from*
*distant stars. The*

*sun we orbit around is one.*
*Earth is third: Earth*
*the third ring.*

Two—
let be.
All that is given by
nature (naturally) within the encompassing
maintains the possibilities of life.
Life happens. Life is happening now.
Abide in peace.
and biotic possibility. Pledge Earth loyalty.
Be grateful. O
the discipline to be free of madness!

Let go and let be.

*Tonight, after having read the words of this poem, you may dream that Gandhi visits you in your dreaming. The Mahatma need not speak. He will talk to you with his gentle smile, real and radiant in the dream-sphere, bearing witness in an aura of soft gold. Remember.*

## EARTH IS On FIRE

I am a human being
I require freedom
Freedom is conditional to *our* humanity

Freedom of thought
Freedom of conscience
Freedom of emotion
Freedom to speak
What I think and feel
To question authority
To search for truth
Freedom of my body
To move and grow
Freedom to say
Yes - to affirm
And freedom to say no

Earth is on fire
The out-of-control fire
Of human ignorance
The uncontained
Fires of wars and murder
The raging fire of hatred
The cold fires of silence
Of bitterness of
Criminal resentment
And the arson fires
Of climate change
The rapacious
Fires of human greed

And there are not enough
Tears
Of mercy on the Earth
To put out the fire
Not enough sanity (or is there)
To cure the fever
Of our madness

I am a human being
I require freedom
Freedom is conditional to *our* humanity
There are not enough
Peacemakers to  prevent war
There is not enough
Love between us – on the Earth
To  stop the conflagration
*There is not enough water*

# ALL FLOWERS

*"The Earth laughs in flowers."*
*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

All tongues
that have spoken in prayer
are equally beautiful.
All places of worship[
all over the Earth
are equally beautiful.

All races
all deeds done
all faces
that have shone with love
shine
and are beautiful.

Harsh world
do not sink further
into the abyss
of hatred and terror
but flower together
throughout all of creation.

All flowers…
all flowering
is beautiful.

## GESTALT of GREEN LIGHT (*Invoking Ecotopia*)

Within the practiced vision
Our lives will be conjoined
Heart and the wings
In unison beat
Green light will again
Be born.

Within the practiced vision
Night and day will conjoin
Earth with the sky
In sweet lullaby
Will embrace us
Securely once more.

Within the practiced vision
Days of war will die
Child of delight
In the field of green light
Will between us
Again be born.

## PHOENIX *

*Crisis is the riddance of a disease.*
*-Hippocrates*

Out of darkness
Emerges the Daybreak Star.

Our of deafness
Emerges a love song.

Out of blindness
Emerges the power of vision.

To live without vision
Starves the soul.

To be trapped in darkness
Destroys the eyes.

Why do you stand in the shadow, a prisoner
Looking cravenly down at your shoes?

Between midnight and morning
Is a lifetime of choices.

A people without shared vision
Is a nation without hope.

Between ruin and renewal:
Ashes, or a phoenix rising.

**Like the ideals of America, what Abraham Lincoln collectively called "the better angels of our natures," the phoenix, a mythical firebird, rebirths itself from the ashes of spiritual death.*

## TORCH: a Parable

"Now it is up to you," the old philosopher says, handing the flaming torch to the youth standing before him. "It is your charisma. You are chosen by the god of time."

"Father, where shall I go? In what direction?"

The elder answers: "Carry the torch to every community and village along the way. Be sure to leave no one out. Whether the wind is on your face or at your back, you must keep the torch lighted and keep yourself moving."

The young torchbearer looks far down the road the two stand on. He questions, "What is my goal? What is my destination?"

The old philosopher places his hand on the youth's shoulder and answers. He says, "Go until you reach the horizon."

Puzzlement in his eyes, the young one replies, "Father, nobody reaches the horizon."

"You have spoken the truth. The horizon is always before us," says the old one. "Still, you are charged to go on. Until one day, after years of discipline, you too pass the torch to another generation. As I have now passed this fiery light to you.

"The torch is a symbol. The flame is alive. Hold the torch high and make it visible. The responsibility is sacred."

## BACK TO the FUTURE

To be a warrior
Is to make a warrior's choice.
A warrior's choice
Is a warrior's signature.

A warrior stands his ground.
She stands her ground equally.
The ground a warrior stands
On is sacred ground.
The land is the life of the people.
The land holds
Ancestral bones.
The land shapes
Visionary dreams
The ground the warrior stands on
Is the place of memory.
Here is the ground
Of the warrior's people.
Here is her ground equally.

By the land the people
Have a birthright to health.
By the land the people
Are ritually sacred.

At the center of the land
Is a sacred mountain.
Beneath the mountain
In the purple-green shadow
Is the valley of generations.
At the mountain's summit
Grows the tree of life.
The hoop of life encompasses the land.
In the depths of the heart of
The mountain grow
The roots, in time out of time
Of the tree of life.

A river runs through
The home of the people.
River is the life giving miracle
Of water. Water is a gift of life.
The gift of water is sacred.
Without water
The land becomes dry.
The land becomes waste
And the land chokes on dust.
Without water the people
And all else that
Lives within the sacred hoop of life
will perish.

Through land and through water
People of the Spirit Warrior
Remain sacred.

A warrior chooses a hero's journey.
A warrior has no need for
Violence, takes up no weapons of
Bloodshed. Commits no murder.
A Spirit Warrior does not
Weaken into armed and deadly
Conflict. Does not submit to fear.
She equally is a Keeper of the Earth.

Warrior's stand together
Defending the ground beneath their
Feet. As far as any eye can see. In
All directions. As far as
The Hawk of Vision flies.

## THE MYSTERIES OF WILLIAM BLAKE

Here is a word
as small as a grain of sand.
I can draw with it
the pictograms of tigers and lambs.
And write out the mysteries of William Blake.

Here is a word
as big and hard and shadowed
as the Tower of Babel
as thick as the Iron Curtain
as long as the Great Wall of China.
And I can hide behind it
and never be seen or known.

Here is a word
and it is my lingo magic
as light as the full moon in October
as playfully colorful
as Autumn leaves
as buoyant as a cosmic balloon.
And I can sail on it
across the ocean of the universe.

And build my nest of love
in the Tree of Life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume contains 70 original titles, the majority of which have been previously published in magazines, ezines, anthologies and journals in various countries as follows:

**USA -** Ararat Magazine, Judaism Quarterly, The Christian Science Monitor, Creation Spirituality, Sojourner, CircleMagazine, Green Man, Fire Heart, Obsidian, New Moon Rising, Country Connections, Baptist Peacemaker, Dream Network Journal, Spiral Journey, Rainbow Bridge Magazine, Gentle Survivalist: the Orion Report, Gatherings: a Journal of Eco Psychology, Mythic Circle, Quail Bell, Pagan Pages, Green Egg: a Journal of Earth Awakening

**UK -** Indie Shaman Quarterly, Pagan Dawn, The Poet, Our Changing Earth Anthology, volume one

**Finland &Sweden -** OVI Magazine, OVI History Magazine, OVI eBooks

**India -** Countercurrents

**Switzerland -**Transnational Perspectives

**Ireland -** Pagan Ireland Magazine

**Canada -** The Trumpeter: a Journal of Ecosophy

**Japan -** The Plaza (bilingual)

## SUGGESTIONS for FURTHER READING

**Spiritual Ecology** edited by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee
**Ecotopia**, Ernest Callenbach
**Earth Education**: a new beginning, Steve Van Matre
**The Climate Book**, Greta Thunberg
**Sense & Sensibility**: the Ecopsychology of Perception, Luara Sewall
**The Power of Nonviolence**, edited by Howard Zinn
**Speaking Out:** Lectures & Speeches, Albert Camus
**Nature & Walking,** Thoreau & Emerson
**Working With the Dreaming Body**, Arnold Mindell

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**Troubadour and the Earth on fire**

An Eclectic Selection in Poetry & Prose of Heart, Soul & Imagination

**David Sparenberg**

Ovi eBook Publishing 2025

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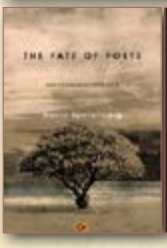
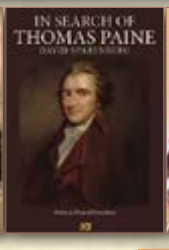
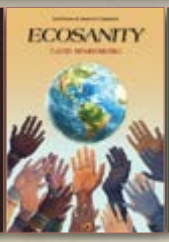
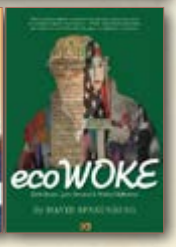
# DAVID SPARENBERG

# *Troubadour and the Earth on fire*

**David Sparenberg** is a humanitarian & eco-poet, international essayist & storyteller. Along with this volume, David is also author of the **OVI eBooks 'In Search of Thomas Paine', 'Ecosanity', 'ecoWoke'.** He is an advocate for democracy, nonviolence and planetary responsibility. David lives in the Pacific Northwest of the United States.